

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

Please replace the claims with the claims provided in the listing below wherein status, amendments, additions and cancellations are indicated.

1. (Currently amended) A method of fabricating a multi-fiber polarization-maintaining fiber assembly, comprising:

(1) a cover removal step for removing covers a few centimeters at one end from a plurality of polarization-maintaining fiber cables with a difference of a few millimeters therebetween whereby exposed fiber portions of different lengths from one another are defined;

(2) an assembly step for inserting the polarization-maintaining fiber cables into an insertion hole of a holder tube, holding ~~[[them]]~~ said polarization-maintaining fiber cables integrally with ~~their~~ said exposed fiber portions thereof arranged abreast at a proximal end, and sealing the ~~leading end of the~~ insertion holes of the holder tube with a thermoset resin which is relatively high in ~~[[the]]~~ viscosity;

(3) an adhesive filling step for filling ~~[[the]]~~ an inner space of a multi-fiber ferrule with a thermoset resin which is ~~relative~~ relatively low in ~~[[the]]~~ viscosity;

(4) ~~[[an]]~~ a fiber cable insertion step for inserting the polarization-maintaining fiber cables assembled integral with the holder tube into the inner space of the multi-fiber ferrule, and inserting ~~thier~~ exposed fiber portions thereof into corresponding fiber holes of the multi-fiber ferrule;

(5) an orientation adjustment step for, while clamping the multi-fiber ferrule with a clamping jig so as not to be turned, rotating each of the polarization-maintaining fiber cables to determine [[its]] orientation thereof; and

(6) an adhesive curing step for heating [[up]] the multi-fiber ferrule while remaining clamped by the clamping jig to cure the thermoset resins.

2-4. (Canceled)